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3 November 1961

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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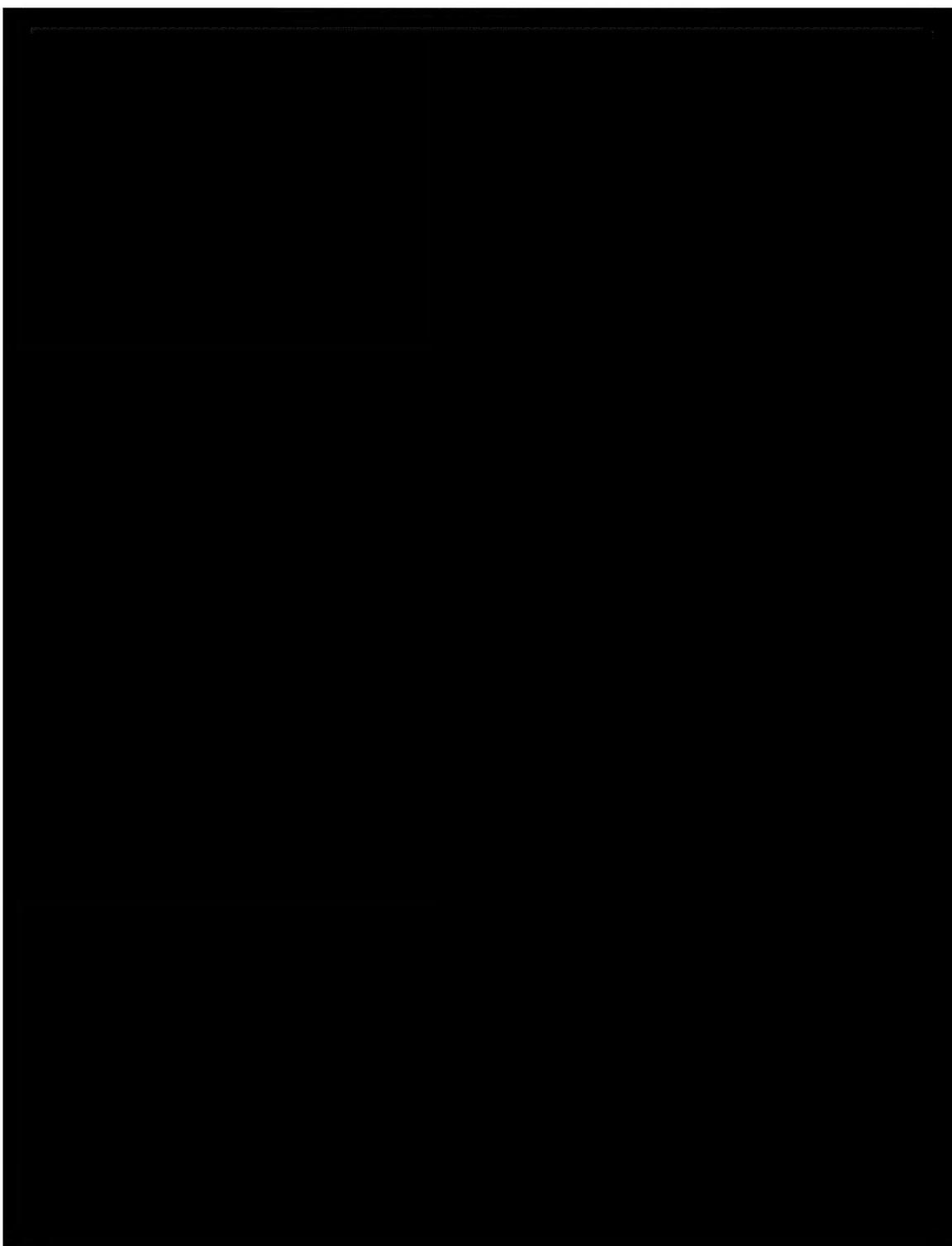
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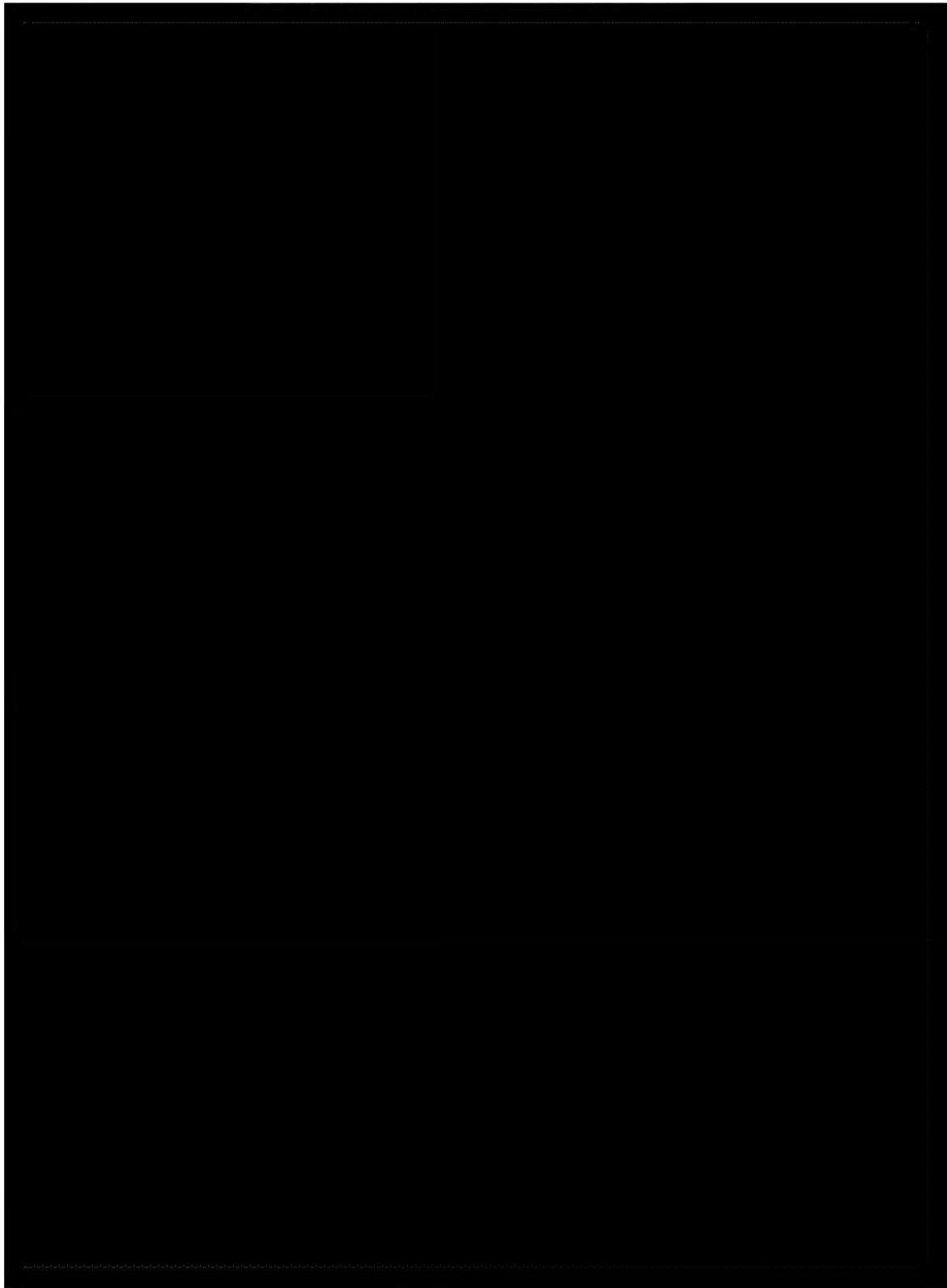
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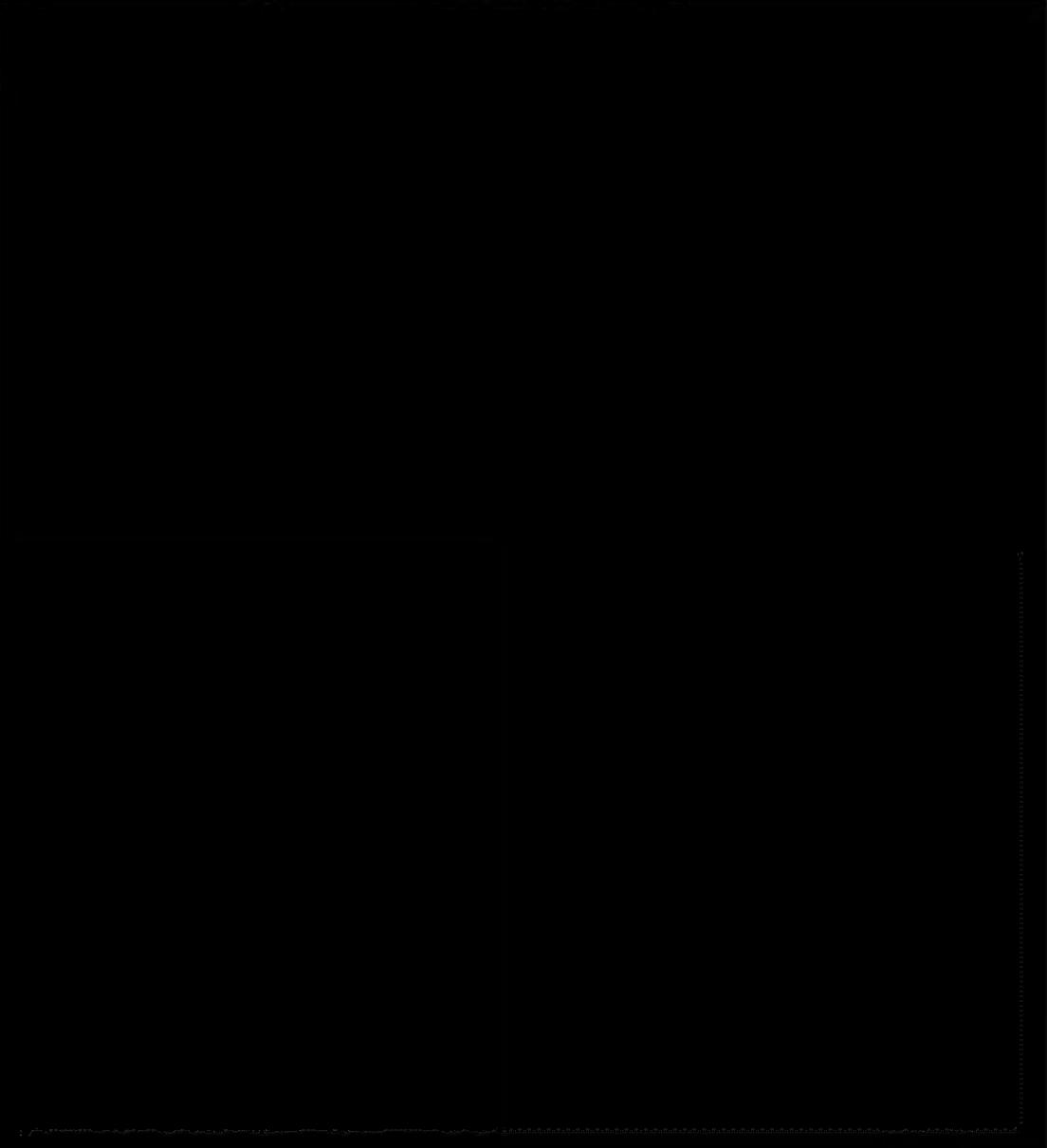
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SOUTH KOREAN LEADER PAK CHONG-HUI Page 7

Lt. Gen. Pak Chong-hui, chairman of South Korea's military junta, will visit Washington in mid-November. Pak and his associates are pledged to eliminate long-accepted political and economic abuses but are not prepared by training or experience to cope with the country's complex economic difficulties. Pak is described by the US Embassy as an able leader; he has yet to establish public support, however, and his position depends on maintaining a balance among the factions in the junta. He is strongly nationalist and reluctant to accept foreign advice, particularly on political and military matters.



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SOUTH KOREAN LEADER PAK CHONG-HUI

Lt. Gen. Pak Chong-hui, chairman of the South Korean Supreme Council for National Reconstruction who is to make an official visit to Washington from 14 to 17 November for consultations, has worked hard to correct chronic graft and corrupt political practices since he seized power last May. Pak had led a force of some 3,500 officers and men in a well-planned and nearly bloodless coup against the weak government of Prime Minister Chang Myon. Pak subsequently chose to exercise his power as head of the Supreme Council, while retaining the incumbent President in order to maintain the legal continuity of the military government. He also retained a cabinet headed by a prime minister as the nominal executive branch of the military government.

Pak's assertion that he moved against the previous government because of its corrupt nature has been generally confirmed by measures the regime has undertaken. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] believes that Pak is leading a genuine revolution from the top and trying to introduce sweeping fundamental reforms. In his first five months Pak has displayed energy and determination. The authoritarian and military characteristics of his regime have marred his public image, however, and there is little evidence of popular enthusiasm. Pak hopes that his visit will enhance his prestige at home and assure continued large-scale American aid for South Korea's shaky economy.

Internal Position

Pak is the most powerful figure in the junta, but his freedom of action is limited by factionalism within the ruling group. He does not have a faction of his own, and the degree of authority he is able to exercise over his associates depends largely on his ability to keep the contending factions in balance. To date he has played this game with consummate skill.

Following the purge last July of Lt. Gen. Chang To-yong, front man for the junta following the coup, factional alignments hardened into two major groups, one led by security boss Col. Kim Chong-pil and the other by Maj. Gen. Yi Chu-il and Marine Maj. Gen. Kim Tong-ha. The core of Kim Chong-pil's faction is a group of field-grade officers who suffered severe casualties in the Korean war and subsequently found promotions blocked by the relatively youthful generals. Sometimes described as "angry young men," they tend to favor protracted military rule and authoritarian measures to solve South Korea's problems.

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Yi's faction is made up largely of senior officers who are more inclined to preserve traditional relationships and institutions. They provide a brake on their more zealous and narrowly nationalistic juniors but are stigmatized by past involvement in corruption.

Pak reportedly desires to reduce the influence of the

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field-grade officers, but in a showdown he might well shift in their direction. Kim Chong-pil, a close relative by marriage to Pak and in control of the secret police, is particularly well situated to hold Pak's confidence. Also, Pak probably recognizes that Kim's group possesses a preponderance of strength. A high proportion of these officers are battalion and regimental commanders in a position to exercise personal command of troops.

Many South Koreans are sympathetic with the reformist objectives of the junta and are not anxious to return to the instability and drifting of the Chang Myon government and the latter years of the Rhee regime. They fear the junta's authoritarian ways, however, and are skeptical of the new leadership's ability to resist the age-old Korean vices of corruption and factionalism and to make good on their economic promises. Should the junta fail to win public confidence, former politicians, students, and intellectuals who have experienced the regime's heavy hand may agitate for its overthrow. While such action in itself would be unlikely to prevail against the guns of the regime, dissatisfied military elements might be encouraged to attempt another coup.

Pak has promised to return the government to civilian authority in mid-1963, but probably intends the junta to retain ultimate control even then. In a public statement last August he outlined a timetable providing for the resumption of political activities by early 1963, the adoption of a new

constitution before March of that year, general elections in May, and a transfer of power that summer. The new constitution is to provide for a strong president and a 100- to 200-seat unicameral legislature. Former politicians who have been declared "corrupt and dishonest" will be prohibited from re-entering politics. Pak is contemptuous of almost all Korean politicians, whom he regards as venal and indifferent to the country's interests.

Foreign Relations

Pak has reversed Rhee's intransigent and often vitriolic condemnation of the "neutralist" nations and is working to broaden South Korea's international ties. Soon after he seized power, good-will missions were sent to many non-Communist countries, including several Afro-Asian states, to explain the "democratic principles of the South Korean revolution." The junta is trying to establish a consulate in India, where North Korea already has a mission, and to open embassies in a number of countries, including Brazil, Malaya, ~~APPROVED FOR RELEASE~~ ^{DATE: JUL 2001} East Coast, and Iran. On 15 September, Seoul added a trade agreement with Thailand to those previously concluded with the Philippines and Nationalist China, and is reported seeking such a pact with Malaya. The government also hopes to gain membership in the Colombo Plan.

The junta is committed to the eventual unification of Korea, but it has given assurances that it will not resort to force to achieve this goal.

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Pak rejects any possibility of unification on Communist terms, and the junta, soon after seizing power, arrested many student, political, and intellectual leaders who had publicly advocated a negotiated settlement with Pyongyang. At the same time, the new government has declared its support for the UN Charter and announced its recognition of the competence and authority of the UN to deal with the "Korean question."

Relations with Nationalist China have become more cordial, and Taipei and Seoul recently exchanged military missions. Any mutual defense understanding reached by the two countries is probably limited to verbal pledges of assistance in the event of renewed Chinese Communist aggression but Seoul also appears to be pushing South Korea's long-standing desire for a regional defense organization built around Taiwan and Korea.

Pak appears to appreciate the economic importance of normalizing relations with Japan--South Korea's normal trading partner--and has expressed determination to conclude a settlement of outstanding differences by the end of the year. While Pak is less subject to public opinion than his predecessors, resentment against the Japanese is strong in Korea and he would wish to avoid the appearance of having sold out Korean interests to Tokyo.

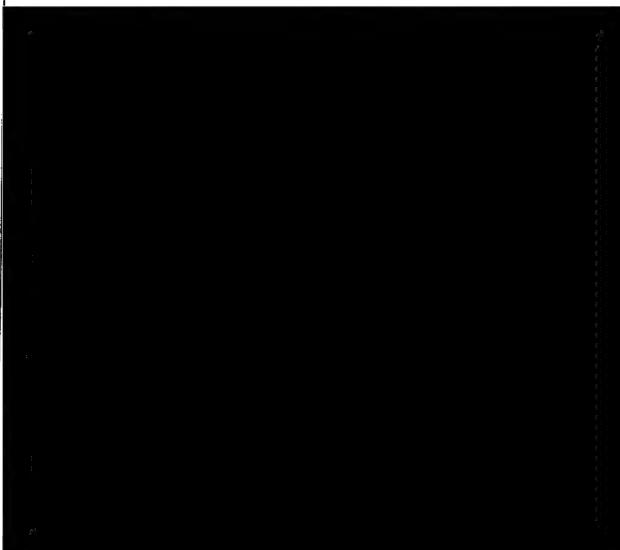
Attitude Toward United States

Pak is friendly toward the United States but critical

of American policy in Korea. He holds the United States culpable for the misuse of aid funds by former governments and for South Korea's lack of a larger industrial base. He particularly distrusts senior Korean generals and civilian officials he suspects of using their control over American aid to feather their own nests.

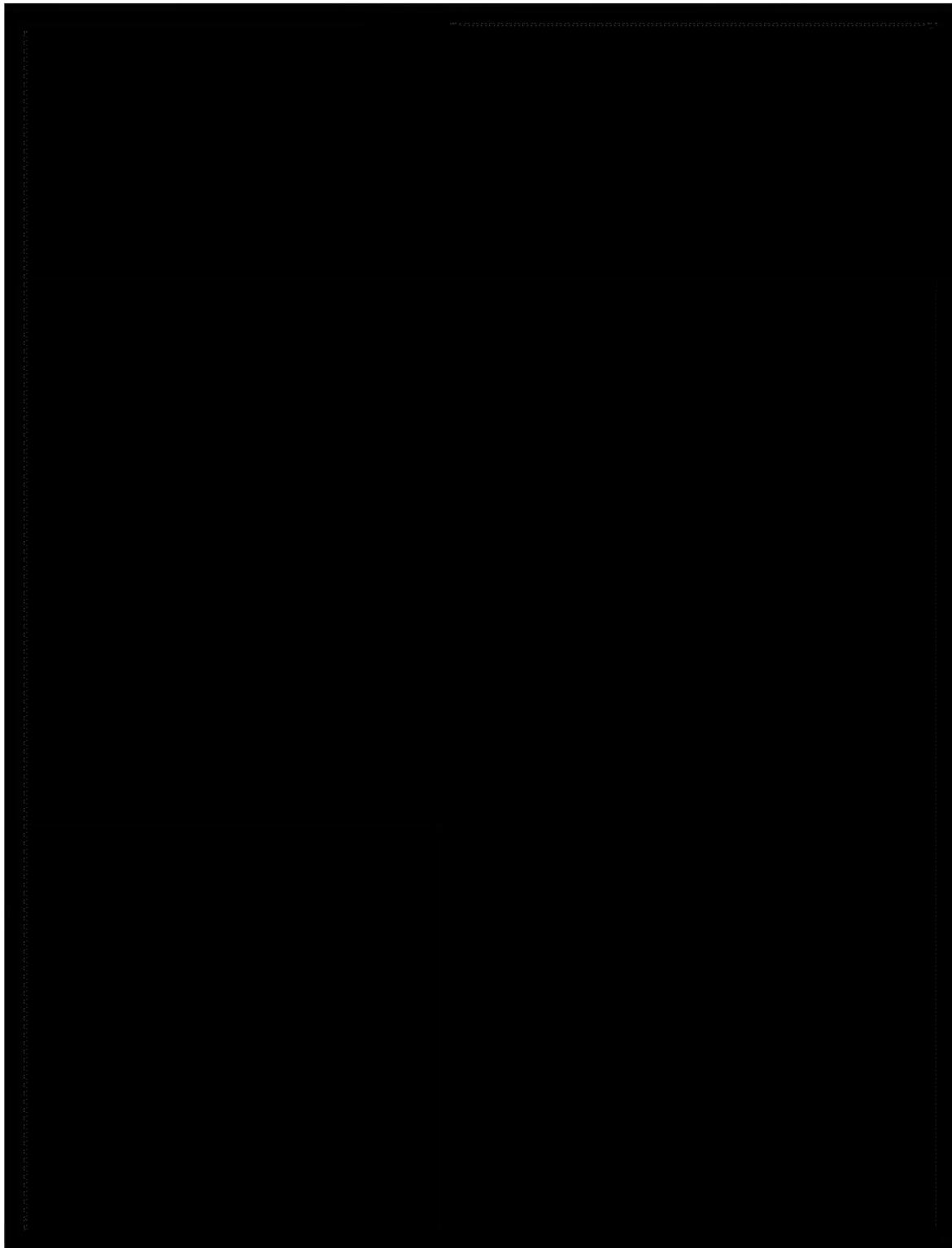
Although he is pledged to maintain South Korea's ties with the United States, Pak's strong nationalistic sentiment militates against easy acceptance of US advice, particularly on political and military matters. Never close to American military advisers, partly because of language difficulties, he once had an adviser transferred for giving advice on which Pak blamed the loss of 300 men in combat.

Pak seems more willing to take advice on economic matters, and soon after coming to power requested an American expert to advise him in this field.



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